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# Afghanistan Situation Report

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25 January 1983

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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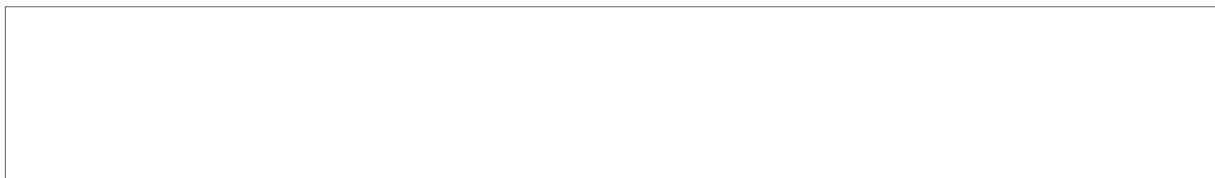


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SOVIETS ASKED MASOOD FOR CEASEFIRE LAST DECEMBER . . . . . 1


The Soviets reportedly wanted a ceasefire to withdraw one of their units or were trying to buy off Masood. 

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SOVIET EFFORTS HURTING INSURGENTS IN QANDAHAR PROVINCE . . . . . 3

Soviet air and ground operations are making it harder for the insurgents to operate in Qandahar province and infiltrate supplies from Pakistan. 

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AFGHAN COMMUNIST PARTY IN-FIGHTING CONTINUES . . . . . 4


A controversey about the drafting of previously exempt Pushtun tribesmen has exacerbated Communist Party factionalism. 

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IN BRIEF . . . . . 4

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SOVIETS ASKED MASOOD FOR CEASEFIRE LAST DECEMBER

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[REDACTED] the Soviets wanted a  
truce around Christmas to withdraw their own and Afghan Army  
troops from Rokha, 25 kilometers up the Valley. [REDACTED]  
Masood was inclined to agree but felt he had little to gain  
beyond the evacuation of Rokha. [REDACTED]

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The Embassy in Kabul reports that several Panjsheri sources say that a Soviet/Afghan negotiating team went to the valley in early January to negotiate with Masood. Fearing a trap, Masood sent a lieutenant to the talks. The regime team offered to pay for damages in the valley if Masood would agree to stop fighting. Masood later refused the offer but said he would be happy to stop fighting after Soviet forces left Afghanistan. [REDACTED]

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Comment: [REDACTED]

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The Soviets may have attempted to use the withdrawal offer as bait to lure Masood into talks and then use the meeting to brand Masood as a collaborator to discredit him as an insurgent leader. Both the Soviets and the insurgents have kept quiet about the meeting, however, indicating that any "agreement" may still be in effect or that both sides want to maintain contacts. [REDACTED]

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SOVIET EFFORTS HURTING INSURGENTS IN QANDAHAR PROVINCE

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Soviet helicopters have been airlifting troops and vehicles to the Pakistan border area to ambush insurgent supply convoys. Between 16 and 26 December eight ambushes stopped insurgent traffic along supply routes to the east of the border town of Spin-Buldak. the Soviets had improved their air and ground tactics to protect convoys around Qandahar city.

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Comment: The Soviets have made little, if any, progress in developing an effective counterinsurgency strategy, but they have taken advantage of favorable terrain and continue to develop and test new tactics to make better use of their forces. The relatively flat and arid land in most of Qandahar province is poor guerrilla-warfare territory but is well suited to operations by the Soviet motorized brigade and air units stationed at Qandahar city. The heliborne operations show that the Soviets realize the importance of infiltrated supplies and men to guerrilla operations and are taking new measures to cut insurgent supply lines. To counter the new tactics, the insurgents will need more anti-aircraft weapons near Qandahar city and will have to lay counterambushes against Soviet heliborne forces.

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AFGHAN COMMUNIST PARTY IN-FIGHTING CONTINUES

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a major split has occurred within the Afghan Communist Party over the drafting of men from certain Pushtun border tribes, who have been traditionally exempt from military service. The controversy has pitted non-Pushtuns (Prime Minister Keshtmand) and detribalized "Kabuli" Pushtuns (Defense Minister Qader and probably President Babrak) against Parchamists and Khalqis from the Pushtun provinces.

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Comment: The tribes in question have been exempt from military service since the early 1930s, because they helped part of the Afghan royal family gain power. The controversy demonstrates that ethnic and tribal animosities are still strong within the Communist party.

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IN BRIEF

--Afghan refugees in Europe and America are attempting to organize an effort to replace the delegation from Kabul with one representing the resistance at the Non-Aligned Movement meeting in New Delhi in March.

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